



*NHVH Resident Bob Wesson shares planting tips with Derek Boucher, a WRHS student.*

## *“Operation Budding Buddies” Celebrates Spring at the New Hampshire Veterans Home*

Spring is in the air at the New Hampshire Veterans Home and Bob Wesson is happy to be planting again. A resident of the New Hampshire Veterans Home (NHVH) since 2003, Bob lived in Pittsfield for many years and was a farmer there. Through the NHVH’s “Operation Budding Buddies” Program, Bob and many of his fellow residents team up with students from Winnisquam Regional High School’s (WRHS) Agricultural Education Center to start flower and vegetable seeds that will be planted in raised beds on the grounds of the Veterans Home in May. Bob smiles when he says, “I love to watch things grow.”

Students at the Ag Center participate in hands-on experiences and skill training that helps them obtain jobs or continue their education in a two or four year college. By working with NHVH residents, they share what they’ve learned and often pick up pointers from residents like Bob Wesson.

James Mazzuchelli, a Plymouth State University Social Work intern at the Veterans Home, worked with WRHS Agriculture teacher Janet Rosequist to help rekindle the program, which had been dormant for several years. James says, “This program benefits both residents and students. Many of the residents have personal experience in botany, agriculture, or leisure gardens; some, like Bob, were full time farmers. The residents share their past experience and the students share their knowledge through their current studies.”



*NHVH Resident Merton Church gives WRHS student Colton McCarthy a “thumbs up” as WRHS teacher Ellen Welch, NHVH resident Hank Keeler, and WRHS student Kenna Jean get to know each other as they plant vegetable and flower seeds for summer gardens at the Veterans Home.*

The nine students are taking a course in Interior Horticulture at WRHS. They study greenhouse methods, floral design, and houseplants. Operation Budding Buddies gives them much more.

Colton McCarthy, one of the WRHS students, likes to talk with the residents about the upcoming Red Sox season. “What’s the best thing about this program?” he grinned, “The vets. We have a lot of fun together.”